

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

FEBRUARY 3, 1824.

Mr. BELL, from the Committee of Claims, to whom was referred the petition of Sarah Easton and Dorothy Storer,

REPORTED:

The petitioners state that their father, the late colonel Robert H. Harrison, entered the military service of the United States, in October in 1775, in the capacity of aid-de-camp to General Washington; and in the spring of the year 1776, was appointed principal secretary to the commander in chief. That he served in these stations until 1781, when his health became so much impaired that it was necessary that he should retire, on furlough, from active service; that he never after recovered his health, nor rejoined the army; and that he died in the year 1790.

The petitioners pray that they may receive, in virtue of their father's services, the commutation for half pay, and the bounty in land, provided by Congress for the officers and soldiers of the revolutionary army, to which they think their father was eminently entitled.

The committee further report, that, from the evidence in this case, it appears, that Colonel Harrison entered the service as an aid-de-camp to General Washington, in the month of October in 1775, and that in May, 1776, he became the secretary of the commander in chief; that he continued in said offices, and in the enjoyment of the confidence of General Washington, until the month of March in 1781, when he retired from the service, and never afterwards rejoined the army.

The committee further report, that they find no evidence to establish the fact suggested by the petitioners, that their father retired from service on furlough, and that the accompanying certificate of General Washington, presented as evidence of that fact, can be regarded in no other light, than as a testimonial of the fidelity, good conduct, and bravery of Colonel Harrison, given to him on his voluntarily retiring from the army, on account of ill health.

The committee further report, that Colonel Harrison died in the year 1790; and that the petitioners are his legal representatives.

The committee further report, that, on the 15th of May, 1778, Congress resolved that all military officers who are or hereafter may be in the service of the United States, and shall continue therein during the war, shall, after the conclusion of the war, be entitled to receive half pay annually for seven years, if they live so long, and that, by a resolution of September 16th, A. D. 1776, they, and the representatives of such of them as should be slain by the enemy, were also entitled to grants of land at the close of the war.

The committee further report, that, by a resolution of Congress of October 21st, 1780, adopting further regulations for the army, it was provided that the whole of the troops be enlisted during the war, and join their respective corps by the first day of January, A. D. 1781, and that the commander in chief, and the commanding officer in the southern department, direct the officers in each state, to meet and agree upon the officers for the regiments to be raised in their respective states, from those who incline to continue in service; and where it cannot be done by agreement, to be determined by seniority; and make return of those who are to remain in service, which is to be remitted to Congress, together with the names of the officers reduced, who are to be allowed half pay for life; and that the officers who shall continue in the service to the end of the war, shall also be entitled to half pay during life, to commence from the time of their reduction.

The committee further report, that, on the 22d of March, A. D. 1783, Congress, by a resolution, provided that commutation of half pay for life, for five years full pay, might be made by officers to whom half pay for life had been, by resolutions of Congress, promised, and that, on the 26th of January, A. D. 1784, Congress resolved, that half pay cannot be allowed to any officer to whom it has not been expressly promised.

The committee further report, that it does not appear that Colonel Harrison was discharged from the service, reduced by any act or resolution of Congress, or that he was included in any class or denomination of officers to whom half pay was promised, or who were entitled to bounty in land, under any act or resolution of Congress.

The committee further report, that it does not expressly appear, that the accounts of Colonel Harrison were regularly settled; but that it does appear, from the ledger of accounts during the Revolutionary war, that he was charged with several sums of money amounting to \$10,776 25, and that he is credited by the United States for the same amount; that the journals of the time have all been destroyed; and that the particular purpose for which the money was advanced does not appear; and that the credit above mentioned appears to have been a mere form by which many of the accounts were closed, without particulars.

The committee further report, that, although it appears that Colonel Harrison lived till March, 1790, it does not appear that he ever made any claim for commutation for half pay, or bounty in land.

The committee, after an examination of the evidence and circumstances in this case, are of opinion that the claim of the petitioners ought not be allowed, and therefore submit the following resolution:

Resolved, That the prayer of the petitioners ought not to be granted.

